

**PREDESTINATION, NOT FATALISM.**

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One of the excuses given by men for not considering the subject of their personal salvation is, "God is omniscient, hence foreknows my destiny; therefore, there is no use in my being worried about it."

It is true that God foreknows all things, and that he knows my destiny; but he has laid down certain laws by which man can be saved, if he obeys them; and if he does not, he will be lost.

He also requires that we be active, and not inactive, concerning our soul's salvation, and holds us responsible for our decisions. Not only does he require this of us, but God helps us to believe in Christ as our Savior, helps us to come to Christ by the Holy Spirit's agency, and the reason why men do not believe and do not come, is because they will not.

The fact is, God offers men salvation upon certain specific conditions, and they must comply with these conditions or be lost.

Failing to justify their position, men say, "That doctrine of predestination bothers me; what's to be will be; therefore, if I am to be saved, I'll be saved, and if I am to be damned, I'll be damned; so there is no use in my being bothered about it."

Such a statement as this is not predestination; you are confounding predestination and fatalism.

There is nothing more obnoxious to the ears of the well-grounded Presbyterian than for a man to say, "Well, I am that much of a Presbyterian that I believe what's to be will be," for the Presbyterian Church does not believe in any such doctrine, and she repudiates such a statement, because predestination and fatalism are two entirely distinct doctrines.

Let us get a clear idea of the meaning of predestination. It means to pre-determine, or to positively fix anything.

What has God predestined concerning the soul's salvation? He has positively fixed (predestined) all the means necessary for the soul's salvation. He gave his only begotten Son to become incarnate in human nature, so that by a vicarious atonement man might have a Redeemer and Savior. He sent the Holy Spirit to convince of sin, to enable to believe, to regenerate and sanctify the souls of believers, by application of the atoning blood of the Christ.

In addition to positively fixing (predestinating) all the means necessary for the soul's salvation, he has fore-ordained, or made an unchanging law that whosoever shall avail themselves of the predestinated means of salvation shall be saved, and those who do not shall be lost.

In view of these clearly revealed facts, I ask, "Who is responsible for the soul which is lost?" Most assuredly not God, for God has positively fixed (predestinated) the necessary means for the soul's salvation, and offers it to all men, on the condition of compliance with his demands. If a man, therefore, wilfully refuses to accept the proffered salvation on these terms, he, and he alone, is responsible for his lost condition.

This being true, we readily see that God does not create any soul for the purpose of damning it.

Let me illustrate what I mean. Here is the state,

acting as sovereign, predestinates (positively fixes) the preservation of human life. She says that human life is sacred and must be preserved at all hazards. In addition to this, she fore-ordains that whoever takes a human life must pay the penalty with his life. The state, as sovereign, holds each individual responsible for his acts. This being true, then that man who deliberately transgresses the law by taking another's life, is responsible, and he alone, for his act.

Who, then, is it that hangs the man? Assuredly not the state, for it has predestined the preservation of human life, and fore-ordained that the murderer shall forfeit his life. Therefore, the man-slayer, by not availing himself of the means for preserving his own life, by his own act hangs himself, and he, and he alone, is responsible for it.

At this point let me show you the difference between predestination and fatalism.

Yonder sits a mother in a chair by a fireplace, in which a fire is brilliantly burning. Through the open door her eighteen-months-old babe enters the room. Attracted by the fire, she rushes towards it with delight, not knowing her danger. If she falls into the flames she will be sure to be burned to death. Suppose the mother sits unmoved, and says, "What's to be, will be. If my child is to be burned up she will be; if not, she will not be, so I'll just sit here and see." If she does this, you know, and I know, what would be the result. This would be bald fatalism.

The fact is, God had predestined that that mother would be there to protect her offspring, and, by predestination, he had implanted in her heart a mother's love for her child, and had given her reasoning powers to know that God had fore-ordained that fire burns, so instantly she springs forward and saves her precious babe from so horrible a death. This is predestination.

Herein is the error of such a reasoner. He supposes that God has fixed, or determined, the end without the means, whereas the converse is true, he always determines the end by the means.

One of the great fundamental laws of God is that man shall live by the partaking of food. Here's the food. If man refuses to eat, he dies, and he alone is responsible for his death.

God has also ordained, as an unchanging law, that the soul can live only by partaking of the bread of life, Christ Jesus, by faith in Christ, by faith in Christ as a personal Redeemer and Savior. If a man, therefore, refuses to eat this bread, his soul must die eternally, and he, and he alone, is responsible for his lost condition, if he refuses to partake of the God-ordained means of salvation.

The position of the one who refuses to consider this subject for the reason herein assigned, is not only dangerous, but it is one of folly. If he carries out this line of reasoning in life, men would say that he had lost his mind.

Let me illustrate. He says, "What's to be will be. If I am to be rich, I will be rich; if not, I will not be, so I'll just sit still and see." All sensible people know that effort, along established or ordained lines, must be put forth in order to succeed in life.

Again, his reasoning would cause him to say, "I am